Met Office

NEWS

Amber warning for snow

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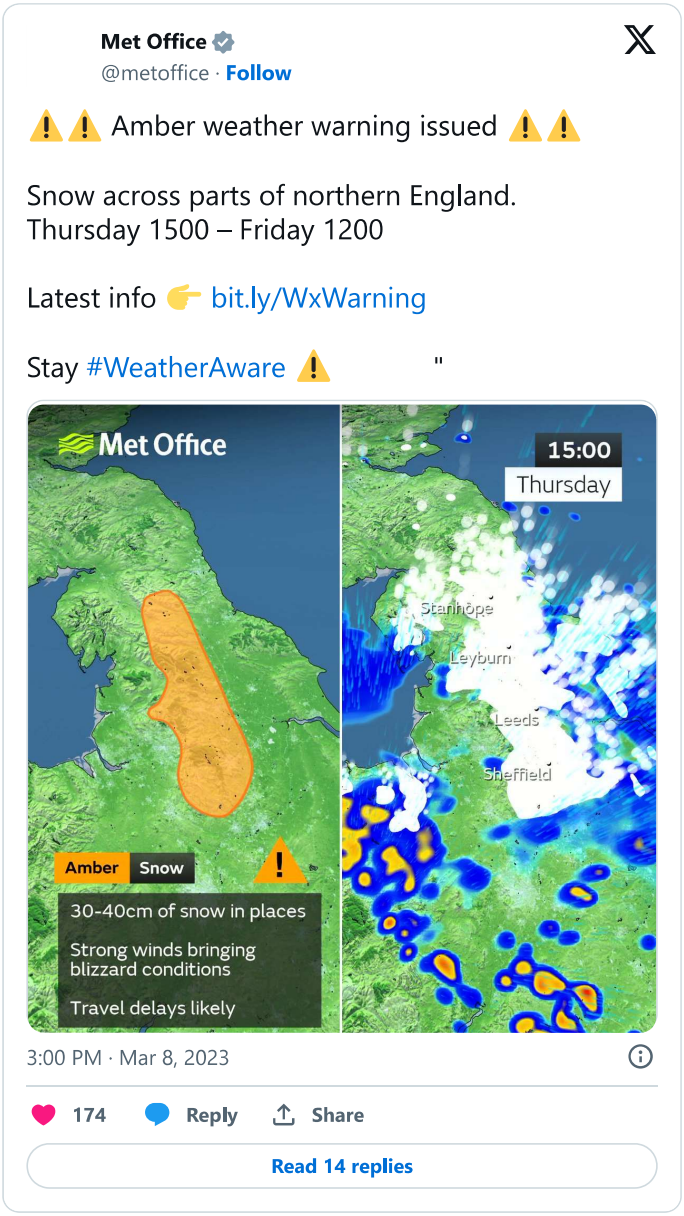
An Amber warning for snow has been issued for central and northern England.

After a cold night, with temperatures dipping to -15.4°C at Kinbrace in Scotland, the Arctic influence on our weather continues through the week as milder, more moist air interacts with the cold air from the North.

As the milder air moves north, the area at risk of snow transitions north with it. A number of National Severe Weather Warnings are in place across the UK as snow continues to cause disruption through the week. An Amber warning for snow has been issued covering an area from the south of the Peak District up to the North Pennines, valid from 1500 Thursday to 1200 Friday. 10-20cm of snow is likely to fall across much of the area, with 30-40cm in some places, and will be accompanied by strong winds.



A larger area across Wales, central England and East Anglia is under a Yellow warning for snow and ice through to 0700 Thursday morning. Within this warning area 2-4cm of snow could accumulate quite widely through the day and overnight, with 5-10cm possible over higher ground. As the snow eases overnight, clear spells could lead to ice developing and persisting though the morning travel period.

Further north, low impact yellow warnings for snow and ice are in force for Wednesday evening and Thursday morning with some localised impacts from snow and ice expected.

Met Office Chief Meteorologist, Matthew Lehnert, said: “The boundary between milder and colder air will slowly move north through Wednesday and overnight, moving the chances of snow further north with it. Snow will have settled quite widely in central parts of the UK as we move into Thursday morning leaving tricky conditions for the morning travel period. It will be another very cold night, especially under clear skies in Scotland where temperatures could get down to -15°C again tonight.

“An Amber warning for snow has been issued for the high ground running north in the centre of northern England as snow redevelops through the course of Thursday and persist until early Friday. Here we could see up to 40cm of snow accompanied by strong winds causing blizzard conditions.”

Whilst the focus for the heaviest and most impactful snow looks to be focused over the Pennines, a broader yellow warning for snow covers north Wales, northern and central England, Northern Ireland and southern Scotland. This warning is valid from 0700 Thursday through to 1800 Friday.

Matthew continued: “Within this large warning area, snow accumulations are less certain. At low levels, accumulations are expected to be more patchy with 2-5 cm in places. However, higher ground of Scotland, north Wales and Northern Ireland could see 10-20cm.”

Further south in the milder air there will be continued rain showers and breezy conditions, there will be clearer skies and more sunshine by Friday afternoon.

Travel disruption

RAC Breakdown spokesperson Rod Dennis said: “Even a little snow on the roads has the potential to make them treacherous for drivers, so we’re advising everyone to proceed extremely cautiously over the next few days. Being gentle on the accelerator and brake is vital to lessen the chances of skidding. It’s also essential drivers go out prepared for the conditions by packing warm clothes and blankets, food and drink and a portable battery charger (power bank) so their mobiles don’t let them down even if their vehicles do.

“Anyone who isn’t confident with winter driving might want to postpone their journeys until temperatures increase.”

Further ahead

As we move into the weekend, the areas of low pressure that brought the milder air will have moved out to the east, returning the UK to a cold northerly flow with wintry showers once again becoming established across northern Scotland and perhaps clipping the east coast of northern England at times.

It will be another cold night on Friday, with a clear and frosty start to Saturday for many.

Another area of low pressure arrives into the west through Saturday making uncertain progress east. This will be accompanied by a band of rain, which will turn occasionally to sleet and snow. The focus of snow is most likely to be mainly high ground across northern England initially, later pushing into Scotland. Further organised bands of snow showers are likely to continue to affect northern Scotland with some reasonable totals building up over the western Highlands and Grampians especially where these features combine. It is likely weather warnings will be issued once the detail of potential impacts becomes clearer.

By start of next week, low pressure from the west will drive strong winds and heavy rain across the south of the UK with up to 40-60mm of rain possible in 48 hours, mainly across western areas. However, the colder air is expected to hang on for longer in northern Scotland where it will be colder and less windy.

Cold weather alert

The UK Health Security Agency has issued a Level 3 Cold Weather Alert for the whole of England which is likely to be reviewed in the coming days.

Dr Agostinho Sousa, Head of Extreme Events and Health Protection at the UK Health Security Agency, said: “During periods like this, it is important to check in on family, friends and relatives who may be more vulnerable to the cold weather, as it can have a serious impact on health.

“If you have a pre-existing medical condition or are over the age of 65, it is important to try and heat your home to at least 18°C if you can.”

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